

COUNCIL ON CORRECTIONS

Meeting Minutes
November 27, 2018
245 Mckee Road
Dover Delaware
5:00-7:00 pm

Attendance COC Members

Darryl Chambers
Muhammad Salaam
Ed Perez
Jane Hovington
Richard Senato
Jennifer Powell

Department of Corrections

Alan Grinstead, Deputy Commissioner
Jayme Gravell
Guests:
Derrick Chambers
Lori Alberts
Michael Bartley
Demerris Daniels

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The meeting was opened by Vice Chair Muhammad Salaam. Muhammad Salaam asked for a motion on the minutes. Richard Senato made the motion to accept the minutes and it was seconded by Chair Darryl Chambers and passed unanimously.

Mr. Senato brought up the agenda item regarding the election. There was some discussion as to when the election was to take place. Jane Hovington made a motion to table the issue of the election and to have a special meeting in order to conduct the election. Mr. Senato seconded the motion. The Vice Chair relinquished the meeting over to the chair.

Chair Darryl Chambers discussed Mr. Senato's discussion regarding the election. He was desirous of all of the members of the committee in attendance for the election. If necessary, a special meeting will be scheduled regarding the election.

Chair Darryl Chambers discussed the previous meeting and the community response. There were a many issues that came forth which were important to the community. From that meeting, there were several items which Alan Grinstead, Deputy Commissioner was to give some feedback.

Mr. Grinstead giving an explanation concerning the playing cards said it took about two years for the process to go forward. The families of the victims were contacted and they signed an agreement for their family member's pictures to be placed on the cards. He brought a deck for the member's purview. Currently the only cards being sold in the institution are these cards. There were other cards but once they were all sold no other cards were made available for purchase. One of the questions that asked was whether the institution would be willing to have both types of cards available for sale, at this time this is not an option. As part of the agreement with the police agency DOC would give them an

exclusive option therefore no other cards could be sold. Jamie added these cards are selling for a dollar less than the other cards.

Mr. Grinstead went on to say Connecticut was contacted regarding some of the mental health issues which were raised. Connecticut hasn't seen any issues at their facilities, on the street or in institution relating to the cold case cards. Connecticut has had 20 cases solved since the cards were introduced. Jayme Gravell stated several other states have similar projects; Florida and Connecticut are using the cards. Connecticut launched their seventh edition of the cards. Each time they solve a case, they issue a new edition of the cards. Mr. Grinstead stated Delaware has received some calls already from the distribution of the cards. Jayme Gravell stated there have been 46 calls received and 2 have been considered "actionable"; they have sold 696 decks of cards since September throughout the state.

Mr. Grinstead stated he had talked to the chief of correctional health services about the mental health aspect who advised the counselors throughout the institutions to advise him if anyone is coming forth in the institutions saying the cards are a problem and desiring to talk with someone. To date there has been no responses.

Mr. Salaam asked if there has been any improvement in the mental health programs to aid and give assistance to the inmates since before these cards. Jayme Gravell explained there hasn't been a reason to provide additional mental health services since no one has complained that the cards has caused any trauma. Mr. Salaam asked if there was a program in place should anything happen. Jayme Gravell advised should something happen, the staff is in position to handle a situation, but they have not created a program. Mr. Salaam continued to explain that he felt there were not enough programs within the institution to serve the inmates in a mental health or educational perspective. Mr. Grinstead questioned the relevancy to the cold case cards. Mr. Salaam responded there should be some preparation for adverse response to the cold case cards. In the other institutions were the cards are being used that had mental health programs established accolades towards the effect of the cards. Mr. Grinstead advised the department has mental health staff on board who meet and treat inmates on a regular basis. If someone came forth and expressed an issue concerning the cards, it would be addressed. This would be a one-on-one treatment issue and wouldn't warrant another program.

Chair Daryl Chambers asked how will the department define whether the cold case card program is or is not a success. If it is found that the use of the cards is not a success, are there any steps in place to remove these cards? Secondly, has a decision been made that there will not be an alternative to these cards? Mr. Grinstead responded, is there not an alternative today for the cards, are they willing to take them off the shelf today and purchased new cards, the answer to that is no. Our agreement was that the law enforcement agencies would print, purchase the card, they would have exclusive rights and we would sell them at the commissary. Mr. Chambers asked have we determined what would be a success. Mr. Grinstead said that if he sat here for five years and sold these cards and there were no change then DOC might reconsider the use of the cards. DOC has gone to

the people who have been doing this and they have not experienced any of the issues that have been raised here.

Mr. Chambers says he does evaluation from DOC and there is set standards as to what is a success or failure. Therefore, there is nothing in place to make this determination. Mr. Grinstead stated they are looking at programs with set standards and they do not evaluate every program coming into the prisons to determine whether an activity is a success or failure. This, the cards, is not something to pretest or posttest. It is a tool to help an investigation. It is a program DOC is a part of, DOC did not put it together, it is information put together by the law enforcement to help the law enforcement agencies with cold cases.

Jennifer Powell wanted to know if there had been any fights attributed to the cards. Jayme Gravell advised the cards are not sold to the public, when an inmate is released, he is able to take the cards home. Mr. Grinstead stated they are not aware of any fights as a result of the cards. Mr. Chambers went on to explain if, with the introduction of these cards, there was an increase in fights there was no evaluation system in place to determine as to whether this the fight is attributed to the cards or not. Mr. Chambers says this is a moot point at this time. It's not important what the community feels about these cards because DOC has already made a decision and has said they will not change their minds.

Mr. Senato said at this point the only option is to keep our ears open to see if there is any negative response to the cards. There was further discussion on the issue of the cards.

Mr. Salaam said there should be a level of patience in dealing with each other; the key point is clarity, we don't spend enough time on it in our dealing with the public. When the public ask questions and the answer is not sufficient, is the question forgotten because we have our own purpose and we've given enough information or do we hear from the public as a preventive method or a way to intervene about particular issues. Some of the responses are based on the experience of the people who have been in jail or out of jail. We become reactionaries when things happen saying we should have been a little more patients and listened to the public just to gather information. This is when transparency is established. As a Council I believe these issues are relevant in particular if we have information so that when we get back to the public we can advise them correctly. Mr. Chambers interjected advising when we ask a question, every answer may not be something we agree with but that doesn't mean it's a wrong answer. Mr. Grinstead said he's not sure what else is expected and were not going to always agree. He tries to get answers and provide answers and tries to give due diligence to any of the questions.

Ms. Hovington asked why the Council was not apprised these cards were coming out so when the public came to members of the Council they were able to respond. Mr. Grinstead said that maybe there should be some further discussion on this issue and determine exactly what this council is supposed to know and not know; what the Council should look like. Mr. Chambers added this is something that needs to be determined as to what is the council's role. Does this council have any authority and exactly what our purpose is in reference to our position in the community and the questions they bring to us? There needs to be some determination as to things we should be made privy to and things we should not be made privy. There have been some issues members of the council were called to be

a part of the discussion and others they were not. Mr. Senato spoke up saying according to Title 29 the Council is an Advisory Board, but how can we advise if we're not aware of what's going on and in order for us to function according to Title 29 here are certain discussions we should be involved in, such as the cards.

There was the question on how DOC determine was transferred and what is the process for the transfer and the procedure. Mr. Grinstead advised they look at individual inmates serving enough prison time so they would not need to be brought back and forth; determine whether they have any appeals pending and how many appeal they have filed. They have had in-depth conversations on medical records to determine whether they have serious medical issues. It's a group effort to make the decisions and determine who is being transferred. The majority come from Kent and New Castle counties. There was additional in-depth explanation as to the process. DOC sends their medical and mental records forward with the inmates. If the receiving facility finds something that they're not able or not willing to handle than they don't have to accept that person.

Public Comment:

Lori Albert: She receives good reports on Sussex and how the warden is striving to get more jobs for the inmates. There needs to be more programs helping inmates to learn how to adjust into society how to open a checking account how to. And they also need ID cards when they are released. A law was passed last year enabling DOC to provide inmates to go to the motor vehicle to get their ID cards and to visual social service get the needed help that they will from them. This ID card will be similar to a voucher and they will not have to pay for this. She also asked if any of the coalition has taken the reentry simulation held by Hope Commission showing how inmates have to survive once they are released. She discussed some other items.

Michael Bartley: Submitted a grievance in regards to her son being transferred and it appears it was retaliation because he has filed so many grievances. He has been transferred twice. He is in an appeal process and a lot of his records did not go with him. Now he's in Connecticut and his mother was at the last meeting and spoke on his behalf. Mr. Barley said they didn't send the entire medical record. Alan said he will look into it as we send the medical records when we send the inmates. The situation with Pennsylvania is different because DOC is under contract with Pennsylvania. They had people who would like to be on the Grievance Board. Mr. Grinstead advised we have no influence on what Connecticut decides once inmates are in their custody. Once they have been transferred to a particular prison we no longer have any authority on them. Delaware can bring an inmate back. Delaware has the opportunity to be model prisons were most people want to change my mind about the choices made. I think the cards are not a positive way of getting information. We should be trying to eradicate crime; these cards will only cause more problems. I was an inmate and because of the program within the institution, I made a change in my lifestyle. Some of the changes are detrimental to the growth of the inmate and the security of the prison. Mr. Senato asked that he put some of these issues in writing. He stated he gave to the Chair is paper on "quality of life" with solution needed in the prisons. Mr. Chambers said he would see the other members of the council receive a copy.

Demerris Daniels: I know you have discussed the issues of the cards, but I just had one question. Why are they not being sold publically? She feels they would serve a better purpose being sold to the public. Mr. Grinstead explained this sale and production of the cards lies with the New Castle and State Police. She questioned whether there have been any positive effects of the cards.

Terry: Spoke on how the playing cards affect things happening on the street. How the lack of interaction in the community hinders the true possibilities of the cards. This is the same within DOC. He feels it is disrespectful to place the face of a victim on the playing cards. Mr. Grinstead explained the victims' families have been contacted and they agreed to have their family member's face on the cards.

There was continued discussion on the cards. Mr. Chambers in closing reminded everyone we are to be at the Baylor Women's facility on December 6, 2019 for a tour at 10:00 am. He asked for announcements and new business. Mr. Salaam stated that we can ask the Comissioner to come into our next meeting to discuss the issue of the death of the three inmates. Mr. Chambers said we need to determine when the next Sunset meeting.

Meeting was adjourned. Notice will be sent out as to the date of the next meeting.